



# COMMUNITY EXCHANGES

A TOOLKIT FOR EMPOWERMENT



### In Sanskrit, Dasra means "Enlightened Giving"

Dasra is India's leading strategic philanthropy foundation. Dasra works with philanthropists and successful social entrepreneurs to bring together knowledge, funding and people as a catalyst for social change.

We ensure that strategic funding and management support reach non profit organizations and social businesses to have the greatest impact on the lives of people living in poverty.

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### American Jewish World Service (AJWS)

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an international development and human rights organization. Inspired by Judaism's commitment to justice, AJWS works to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world. AJWS believes that change must be driven by robust and representative grassroots organizations and be supported by national governments, private enterprise and the broader international community. AJWS's support emphasizes three key issue areas: promoting civil and political rights in places experiencing conflict or repression; natural resource rights and economic justice; and sexual health and rights.

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# Contents

According to official estimates, over 12,000 Indians were killed and hundreds of thousands were rendered homeless when a tsunami triggered by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake near the Indonesian island of Sumatra hit the southern peninsula coast on 26 December. The earthquake registered 9.0 in moment magnitude and was the third largest earthquake ever recorded on a seismograph. This was followed by strong aftershocks, including a 9.0 magnitude quake in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The earthquake triggered a series of devastating tsunamis along the coasts of most landmasses bordering the Indian Ocean, killing over 230,000 people in fourteen countries, and inundating coastal communities with waves up to 30 meters (100 feet) high. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history.

The state of Tamil Nadu was the worst affected on mainland India with an official death toll of 7,793. Entire villages were destroyed and people's livelihoods wiped out.

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# Introduction

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: HEAL 2010



## Why we made this toolkit

After the 2004 Asian tsunami, Dasra was approached by American Jewish World Service (AJWS) to implement tsunami recovery programs in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The AJWS model is different from other global development organizations because AJWS does not run any of its own projects or relief efforts. Instead, AJWS gives grants and strategic assistance to grassroots organizations working in a variety of areas including community response to conflicts and emergencies.

While other organizations helping tsunami affected communities focused on immediate relief, AJWS gave Dasra five years to assemble a team of partner grassroots organizations to create and implement rebuilding programs. Along with our partners, we designed a variety of programs that would mobilize and empower communities to take charge of their own development. The common thread throughout these innovative programs was the use of community exchange programs to empower teaching and learning communities.

When we began tsunami reconstruction work in 2004, we were focused on disaster mitigation and rebuilding. In the process, we have been amazed to learn how effective and low-cost community exchanges can be for many types of community development.

Ultimately, we have seen communities in Tamil Nadu use community exchanges not only to rebuild, but to thrive even beyond pre-tsunami levels. These community exchanges foster partnerships within communities that were historically disconnected. We have frequently seen community exchanges begin a paradigm shift in local community structures and outlook, creating impact that will stay with communities long after funding is depleted.

After witnessing the potential of community exchange programs in Tamil Nadu, we decided to create this toolkit to break down what we have learned and inspire you to try a similar intervention in your own community.

# Introduction

## What is a community exchange program?

In this handbook, Dasra defines community exchange programs as programs or projects that have a peer-to-peer learning component and are run by community members for the entire community's benefit. This broad definition includes a wide range of projects that can vary by theme, goal, and implementation strategy. Although often a non-governmental organization (NGO) or a local community-based organization (CBO) initiates the community exchange program and provides initial funding, ideally the NGO should be able to let the community control the program once it is up and running.

### Characteristics of Community Exchange Programs:

- Require community members to teach and learn from each other
- Are run by the community
- Are run for the community
- May rely on an NGO for logistical and financial support

### Basics of the Two Models

In Tamil Nadu, Dasra organized a range of projects using two different models of community exchange programs. One such model involves community members training another community on a skill or community organization strategy ('peer exchange'). In the other model, a NGO identifies community members and trains them to lead their work in their own community ('teaching exchange'). Once trained community members are competent in working within their own community, they train similar counterparts in other villages.

## Our Toolkit

This toolkit intends to be a guide for organizations and communities working to mobilize and empower people to better sustain themselves. It will teach you how to organize community exchanges as new programs or to incorporate community exchanges into your existing work. Dasra has found community exchanges to be one of the most inclusive and cost-effective ways to foster lasting change within communities and we are therefore passionate about spreading our lessons far and wide.

We categorize community exchanges into two different models, the 'community-to-community', also referred to as the 'peer exchange' model and the 'NGO-to-community facilitator-to-community', also referred to as the 'teaching exchange' model. The bulk of this toolkit will teach you how to implement your own community exchange using either model or a combination of the two. Here you will find guidelines and worksheets to help you create your project, examples from our experience, troubleshooting advice and a hypothetical scenario that will walk you through each stage of dummy project design.

We include chapters on:

- 1) Picking a Path: (i) The two models and (ii) our three case stories.
- 2) Project Design and Planning: (i) Focus your vision, (ii) conduct a needs assessment, (iii) develop relationships within your community, (iv) create a schedule, (v) draft a budget and (vi) begin an action plan.
- 3) Implementation, monitoring and exit: (i) Organize and implement the community exchange, (ii) follow up with your community after the exchange, (iii) document and monitor during the project and (iv) evaluate your project at exit
- 4) A Hypothetical Example of an Exchange: Follow an example through the entire process.

Our appendices include warm-up activities for community activities, how to formalize a CBO, worksheets, and contact information for organizations and communities mentioned in this book.

Please use this toolkit as a resource for creating and improving upon your own programs. We realize that the possibilities for community exchanges are limitless, and we believe that each organization knows more about their target communities than we do. Therefore, let this toolkit be an inspiration and guide that you can modify to your specific situation.

# Introduction

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: HEAL 2010



## Why we love community exchanges

Community exchange projects have limitless potential. By empowering community members to teach and learn, their costs remain low, thus allowing for greater sustainability.

- Peer teaching benefits instructors by allowing them to (i) help their peers, (ii) solidify their own knowledge and (iii) take ownership of their project.
- Learning communities also get benefit because they learn practical skills from people very similar to themselves. Once the learning community has mastered what they have learned, they can in turn become the teaching community. Switching from learning to teaching (i) reinforces a community's knowledge and (ii) keeps the project sustainable since additional teaching communities can educate more learning communities.

By seeing the direct results of what the community can accomplish when working together, community members become more proud of their community and its collective effort. For example, Dasra has worked with marginalized villagers who were afraid to even show their faces in nearby towns because of community bias and now are happy to teach other communities about first aid techniques.

Community-driven programs are comparatively inexpensive and sustainable. Although there can be relatively large initial costs in training and for seed money for a project, programs continue at relatively low costs since community members themselves run the project.

## What kind of project can use the community exchanges models?

Dasra has seen community exchanges work successfully for knowledge transfer in a variety of subjects and skills such as mentoring, disaster mitigation, and the organization of federations of similar CBOs in different villages. Although the applications for community exchanges are endless, we have seen that three factors are essential for a community exchange project's success are (i) the organizing NGO's pre-existing relationships with the community, (ii) that the participants have time to implement the program, and (iii) the relative ease of knowledge transfer.

We highly recommend that you only move forward implementing a program somewhere where you have relationships with the community, community members have at least some time to help make the program a success, and there is enough time in the exchange or project for community members to learn the amount of information that they are supposed to. Our toolkit will go into much more detail about this and help with decision making.

# Introduction



Photo: Charlotte Anderson: Manitham 2010

## Who this toolkit is for

### NGOs and CBOs

This toolkit is for grassroots NGOs and CBOs working for community development on a village-by-village basis. NGOs can use this handbook to increase the efficacy of their existing programs or to create new programs.

### Communities

Communities that want to create a community-driven intervention on their own, or have been approached by a NGO to do so will also find this toolkit useful. Specifically regarding India's tsunami affected regions, Dasra made this book for the people in communities throughout Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh who have learned and benefited from community-driven programs and as a result, it will be translated into local languages in the future.

### Funders

Philanthropists or grant-making organizations can use this toolkit to give effectively by investing in cost-effective community exchange programs that are sustainable and create a lasting impact in communities.

Whoever you are, happy reading and learning!

## Using the toolkit

The landscape format of this toolkit allows the reader to go through the instructional toolkit on the right hand side of each page, but at the same time dip into some of our stories from the field, working in coastal Tamil Nadu – *Field Experience*, generally in the left hand columns. There is nothing better than learning from case stories of real projects, but after your first read, you will then be able to dip back into the toolkit and search for the relevant part of the toolkit instructions with out trawling through a long narrative.

In the appendices we also include a long list of icebreaker games for community meetings and workshops and we have also printed a number of worksheets at the back that you can photocopy and use, or copy.

# chapter one

## *picking a path*

- Two Models of Implementation

The Peer Exchange

The Teaching Exchange

- Three Case Stories from Tamil Nadu

Fisherman's Taskforce

Wave of Life

Mangrove Plantation

## Two Models of Implementation



Dasra recognizes two different models of successful community exchanges.

### Model 1: The 'Peer Exchange'

In this model, a community possesses a specific skill or knowledge base that another community would like to learn. The two communities coordinate with each other and representatives from the teaching community instruct the learning community directly. When necessary, an NGO or other intermediary institution facilitates communication and coordination between the two communities so that a successful exchange occurs. Depending on the nature of the knowledge transferred, NGOs may also be able to help learning communities follow up and apply the knowledge after the training is completed.

Ideally, once a learning community masters the skills or information, it can become a teaching community to other communities.

In this model the NGO may have identified the potential of the exchange and introduced the communities but essentially the teaching community holds all the knowledge for the implementation of the program.

This model only works when a community knows the information that needs to be transferred. Indeed only if the NGO has the information and there are no communities that are eligible to be a teaching community, the NGO staff may need to start off by teaching a community themselves. Once the first learning community has mastered the information and skills, it can become the teaching community to other communities.

This model is suitable when the project requires a substantial information transfer that can be completed in a relatively short period of time. This period of time should not exceed the maximum time that teaching and learning communities can spend away from their work and families to attend the initial community exchange.

## Two Models of Implementation



### Model 2: The 'Teaching Exchange'

This model is still a community exchange, but instead of a teaching community instructing the learning community directly, a representative (or small group of representatives) of the community itself instructs the rest of the community. In the first phase of the program this community representative (referred to as a community facilitator) may be trained by the NGO, but in later phases they teach other community facilitators from other communities. Thus, while the initial community facilitators are trained by the NGO, subsequent ones are trained by community facilitators from communities where the program has already been implemented.

NGO trains first batch of facilitators-->

community facilitators implement program in their own communities-->

successful community facilitators train new community facilitators in new communities or train more communities members in the same community

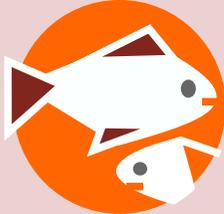
While an NGO may entirely lead the first round of training, it usually just needs to provide oversight and support to subsequent rounds of training. However, the NGO may also be needed to provide facilitator support and monitoring during program implementation when training facilitators go back to their own communities.

This model is suitable for projects where programs or trainings occur on an ongoing basis in the same community. Organizing frequent community to community exchanges is inefficient and often logistically impossible, so this model can be even more cost effective than Model 1. Therefore in many instances it will be more effective to train one (or a few) community facilitators in each village who are then responsible for carrying out the ongoing program in the village. This model also works well for projects that require extensive follow-up because the community facilitator lives in the community and is around to provide additional support or follow-up.

# Three Stories from the Field

## An introduction to the concepts behind our three case stories

Throughout the toolkit you will find examples coming from our community-exchange projects in Tamil Nadu. Examples are color-coded according to which project they come from. Here is a brief introduction to each project. Each community exchange project was funded by AJWS, facilitated by Dasra and involved a variety of grassroots partners.

MODEL I PEER EXCHANGE	MODEL II TEACHING EXCHANGE	
 <p data-bbox="488 1038 757 1106">Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange</p>	 <p data-bbox="1115 1038 1267 1106">Wave of Life Exchange</p>	 <p data-bbox="1704 1038 1966 1106">Mangrove Plantation Exchange</p>



## PEER EXCHANGE

# Fishermans' Task Force Exchange

## Community exchanges to build disaster mitigation institutions for fishing communities

In a series of community exchanges, fishermen taught and learned a systemized approach to disaster mitigation. During community exchanges, the teaching community instructed a learning community how to form a 'task force' of community members to lead the village's warning and response efforts to natural disasters. After successfully creating a task force in their own village, each learning community became a teaching community to help other villages create task forces.

### The Concept

Because of its geography, coastal Andhra Pradesh is prone to frequent cyclones. Well before the 2004 Asian Tsunami, many fishing villages in Andhra had already organized community task forces in their villages as a local organization to prepare for and respond to disasters. In contrast, Tamil Nadu fishermen had little experience with dangerous weather conditions and no disaster plans to cope with them.

After the tsunami, many realized that Tamil Nadu villages would also benefit from task forces. Villages that had weathered the tsunami needed both disaster response plans for the future and the tools to feel less helpless in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, Dasra organized a 'task force creation' community exchange with NGO partners in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, and Vellakoil, a village in the Nagapatnam district of Tamil Nadu. During this exchange, task force representatives from Andhra taught their Tamil counterparts how to form a task force and use it as a village empowerment tool.

Initially the Tamil learning community were skeptical of what other fishermen would be able to teach them, but they agreed to participate in the community exchange. However, three days into the eight day exchange, the learning community realized that a task force would really help their village and they resolved to focus on learning as much as they could from the exchange. Within three years, the Vellakoil task force formed during the community exchange trained other communities in Tamil Nadu in task force formation, organized villagers' food and shelter after a cyclone, lobbied the government on behalf of villagers' rights, and formalized itself into an independent CBO.

#### *Voice from the field:*

*"At first, we weren't even used to men and women working together. But when we saw our trainers from a fishing village like ours, we decided that we too could participate together, men and women, in the training and in creating our task force."*

*Female task force member, Vellakoil*

#### Situation:

Fishing villagers in coastal Tamil Nadu were decimated by the Tsunami with loss of life and infrastructure with a huge impact on livelihoods. Many people died in front of their family members and friends and the villagers could not save them since they did not know life saving skills or how to mobilize as a group to deal with the immediate aftermath of the wave.

#### Need:

To understand the effect of teamwork, involving the community as a whole in overcoming the recent disaster and creating effective response strategy in case of future disasters.

#### Goals:

To teach affected communities about overcoming the challenges of natural disasters and prepare for future disaster mitigation by forming up a task forces by learning from experienced community task forces from Andhra Pradesh.

#### Length of program:

Four to eight day training (longer training time when translation is required) with five years of additional NGO support.

#### Participating Partners:

Teaching Community: Sanghamitra Service Society (AP),  
Learning Community: ROSE

#### Outcome:

Establishment of successful task forces that focus on disaster mitigation and support of a range of community development activities.



Number of villages: 5



TEACHING EXCHANGE

**Situation:**

Families across the Tamil Nadu coastal region experienced extreme trauma during the Tsunami. Women, children and men witnessed violent natural destruction and loss of life. Families experienced the death of loved ones but also witnessed terrifying scenes such as floating bodies and after the wave were too scared to go near the water, a huge problem for coastal living people.

**Need:**

Emotional healing from the psychological trauma of everything they saw and experienced.

**Goals:**

To provide safe space around children and young women to explore their pain and heal.

Length of program: Three months with meetings at least once a week.

**Participating Partners:**

Teaching NGO: Dreamcatchers

Organizations mobilizing the communities: ROSE, DROPPS, SEA

**Outcome:**

Children who completed the program reporting being happier, better able to concentrate in school and more in touch with their community.



Number of villages: 14

# Wave of Life Exchange

## The Wave of Life and Children's Psycho-social Care

The Wave of Life was a three month emotional healing and self discovery curriculum including art and speaking activities, that helped children move beyond the pain they experienced right after the tsunami. The program improved children's behavior and confidence and built community between several generations of community members.

### The Concept

Dreamcatchers is an organization that builds contemplative exercises, activities, and tools that respond to children's emotional needs. These tools are especially designed for first-line responders such as teachers, local social workers, and community members. Dasra partnered with Dreamcatchers to develop and implement the Wave of Life program in 14 villages in Tamil Nadu.

Dreamcatchers worked with local NGO partners to conduct a needs assessment and locate and train community facilitators in each village. In the first phase of the program, Dreamcatchers staff trained local community facilitators themselves. In subsequent iterations, experienced community facilitators trained new facilitators with little NGO oversight of the training process.

Once facilitators were trained, they returned to their own villages to implement the weekly Wave of Life activities. After their children had participated in the program for a few weeks, most parents noticed a positive change in their children's behavior and outlook. When the program ended, children reported that they were happier at home, school, and while participating in general village life.

#### *Voice from the field:*

*"I got an opportunity to express out my grief so I feel completely healed and have identified my good qualities. I am now capable of respecting the good qualities and I appreciate them. Again and again I will have happy days in my life through this program."*

*Participant in the Wave of Life Program, Chidambaram, TN.*



TEACHING EXCHANGE

**Situation:**

The effects of the deforestation of many mangroves fields in Tamil Nadu became particularly obvious during the Tsunami, as it was clearly seen the villages with mangroves were protected from the destruction of the wave.

**Need:**

Post Tsunami reconstruction also looked to the future and it was clear that planting more mangroves would create more resilient shorelines and a healthier aquatic ecosystem.

**Goals:**

To teach communities the skills to plant mangroves and follow up with strategies and processes to cultivate the plantations.

**Length of program:**

One year

**Participating Partners:**

Teaching NGO: COPDANET

Learning communities mobilized by HEAL, ROSE and SPIRIT

**Outcome:**

Sadly mangrove forests did not take root because of inadequate follow up by the learning communities.



Number of villages: 2

# Mangrove Plantation Exchange

## Community Exchange to Plant Mangroves in Coastal Communities

Community employees of an NGO's mangrove seedling nursery trained other coastal communities in mangrove plantation and assisted them in planting mangroves in their own communities.

### The Concept

Mangroves have been completely deforested in many of the places where they used to grow along the Tamil Nadu coast. Because adult mangroves have extensive root systems, they are effective at absorbing wave action during storms and protecting soil against erosion. In addition, mangrove roots provide habitat for crabs, shrimp and small fish, the tree branches provide shelter for birds, and their decomposing leaves enrich the soil, providing nutrients to the entire aquatic food web.

Mangrove afforestation efforts gained momentum following the 2004 tsunami when villages sheltered by mangroves were significantly less affected by the tsunami than other coastal villages. Beginning in 2005, Dasra partnered with an organization that employs dalit women to run a mangrove seedling nursery and plant the seedlings in the wild when they are mature enough. Dasra organized community exchanges wherein these women would help two other coastal communities plant mangroves.

After teaching the learning communities how to collect and plant seeds, the teaching NGO raised all 2,500 seedlings in its nursery. The NGO leaders identified where the mangroves would be planted in the learning communities and then transported the mature seedlings to the learning communities for planting. The teaching NGO partnered with the learning communities to plant all of the seedlings, but then left each community responsible for its own monitoring. Mangrove seedlings are quite vulnerable when first planted, and unfortunately many died due to inadequate monitoring by the learning community. This case story is an example of where the model can be less successful if certain measures are not taken and the stories through the toolkit will go into more detail about the challenges faced. It is also an example of where the program was too technical for a community exchange to be successful.

*Voice from the field:*

*"Although we got paid less than our daily wages at the nursery, we were happy to help other villages plant mangroves because we wanted to help them."*

*Teaching community nursery employee*

# chapter two

## *from idea to execution*

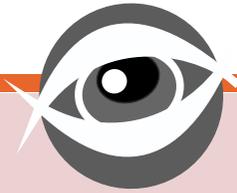
How to plan and design a community exchange project

Introduction

Project Design and Planning

- Vision
- Community Role
- Right Partners
- Needs Assessment
- Schedule & Workplan
- Budgeting
- Action Plan

# Introduction



FIELD EXPERIENCE



## Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange

*Sustained impact*

Task force members in Vellakoil do not just know how to run a task force, but running a task force has enabled the community to tackle other problems such as accessing government support schemes. The model can teach community a whole new way of working and not just how to implement and immediate project.

A successful community exchange project is one that mobilizes and empowers the community in a way that is sustainable.

### Mobilizes

A project that mobilizes the community:

- Galvanizes community members to work together rather than creating new divisions or animosities
- Gives everyone of a specific population (i.e. children, adolescent girls, adult men and women, etc.) equal opportunity to participate
- Allows participants to feel like their opinion counts in all phases of project planning and implementation.

### Empowers

Ideally the community exchange project is one that not only teaches the community to cope with a specific problem, but to use their skills developed during the project to confront a variety of challenges.

### Sustains

The community exchange project must create an outcome that is sustainable with little or no help from the NGO or outsiders. Community members should continue the project because it is in their own best interest. If outside funds are necessary to sustain the project, they should be minimal and their use should be controlled by community members.

There is no one foolproof path to creating a successful community exchange program; each community is different and each implementing organization's budget, availability, and expertise is different. It is important that any organization setting up a community exchange program do so in a way that is consistent with the organization's goals and capabilities. Here we present a series of tools to guide you through each portion of project design and implementation. Use these tools as a roadmap to creating your own community exchange project.

A community exchange project:



# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Vision

A project's vision is where you want to end up, or said another way it is how you see the future as a result of the project. It can also be seen as your overarching goals and proposed outcomes.

### Your vision must be:

- Useful and accessible to the community
- Something new that adds value to the community
- Simple enough that the community can master the whole process
- Cost-effective
- Inclusive of the community at every step of design, planning and implementation

### First steps to design

When thinking about how to start a brand new project, ask yourself these questions:

- Q. Do you already have relationships with all of the communities and partners involved? If not, how will you create those relationships?
- Q. Do the people you want to work with actually have time to work with you? How will you schedule the project so that it can involve everyone?
- Q. Is the project something new? Does it add value to the community? If it has been done before, how will the way you do it be different?
- Q. How easy will it be to transfer the knowledge required for the project to the community?

### Deciding if a community exchange model is right for your project

We encourage you to be creative when deciding whether to use a community exchange model for your project. While the possibilities of projects that can be modified or created to be community exchange are endless, some projects may be more suitable using the alternative approach. Foremost, a community exchange project must be useful to the community as a whole. Even if the project is geared towards a specific segment of the community (such as children) all community members either feel the project's positive effects, or at least are not negatively impacted by the project. In addition to being useful, the project should be moldable by the community. Remember, a good community exchange project involves community members at every stage of the process. If an NGO is too rigid about the expected outcome of the project, then the community will not be able to take enough ownership of the project process.

The tricky part of creating a good community-based project is that a project should be new and add value to the community. However, the project cannot be too complicated because the project must be simple enough that the community can master the whole process and eventually not rely on any outside assistance.



## FIELD EXPERIENCE



### Mangrove Plantation Exchange

*A project can be too complicated to transfer successfully through a community exchange model*

One challenge we faced in beginning mangrove plantations in new learning communities was that it takes a lot of scientific and technical expertise to grow mangroves. While parts of the process can be broken down and taught, most of the mangrove nursery employees who comprised the teaching community did not know enough about the necessary environmental factors to be able to determine where mangroves should be planted. It was difficult for both the teaching community and the learning communities to take control and ownership of the mangrove planting process when neither had an input in the decisions regarding where the mangroves should be planted.

Perhaps our vision was too complicated for the Community Exchange model. Perhaps we didn't ask ourselves if the level of complexity was easily transferable.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Community's Role

While it is sometimes hard to classify a project ahead of time, and the answers to many of these questions may only become apparent once you start the project, keep in mind that some projects we found work well and other worked less well or even failed.

### What works well and what works less well?

#### WHAT WORKS WELL



Wave of Life and the Fisherman's Taskforce exchanges worked well.

#### Types of projects that work well:

- Projects where one community can teach another a useful skill or set of skills
- Projects that allow participants to share their feelings/experiences with one another
- Projects that only use locally available supplies
- Projects in which community members can determine the course of the project
- Projects that community members are excited about
- Projects where the community members have all the know how, not just a part of the process

#### WHAT WORKS LESS WELL



The Mangrove Plantation Exchange did not work as well and in some areas failed.

#### Types of projects that do not work well:

- Projects where the results of community members' efforts cannot be noticed until far into the future
- Projects that are so technically complicated that an outsider must supervise and oversee critical steps of the project
- Projects that have a rigid goal, set externally
- Projects that require intense local follow up that community members may not have time or interest for
- Projects that are too expensive
- Projects in which success depends on difficult-to-obtain supplies or expertise

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## The Community's Role in Project Design and Planning

### Pitching the project and/or the approach to the community

Ideally, community exchanges would surface organically when a community member decides that they want to learn something new. However, this rarely happens because most community members are so entrenched in their own day-to-day lives that they do not know what they could learn from other similar communities in a different geographical area. This is where NGOs come in. Since an NGO has access to ever greater information via other NGO partners, other NGOs funded by the same donors, conferences, and the internet, it is often the NGO staff or management that puts two and two together and realizes the value of a community exchange or the value one community can bring to another. Many successful exchanges have started when Community A may not have ever heard of Community B, but someone at the NGO sees them coping with similar problems that they could work together to solve.

This approach can only really work with local NGOs who have a deep grassroots experience of community work. One should be very aware of the pitfalls of a top down approach when non-local NGOs decide to transfer a 'best practice' without a relevant depth of local knowledge. If an NGO feel they have a potential project to pitch to a community they should:

- Spend time with individual community members and make sure you understand the issues that they think are most pressing to the community
- Explain how this project addresses community members' problems (if it doesn't address any of their stated concerns, how can it help them anyway?)
- Clearly explain how much time community members will need to dedicate to the project and what they can expect their community to gain
- Wherever possible use tangible visuals to show community members what the project process and outcomes could look like (ie photographs, a short movie, or a slide show of other communities who have also done this project)
- Emphasize your track record in helping the community.
- Approach influential people in the community and seek their permission and support
- Proactively brainstorm about potential problems that may arise as a result of the community exchange

If you do not have clear community approval after doing all of these things, you should avoid this approach, as a successful program has to have a carefully facilitated bottom up approach.



### FIELD EXPERIENCE

Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange  
*Bringing communities together*



While planning the post-tsunami rebuilding programs, a Dasra staff member visited Sanghamitra Service Society, an organization based in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Sanghamitra had effectively organized 20 coastal communities in their area to form task forces to deal with disaster warning, rescue, first aid, etc. Not only do these task forces actually respond to disaster in times of crisis, but they strengthen local governance and problem-solving on an ongoing basis.

Seeing Sanghamitra's successful model convinced Dasra that part of rebuilding a devastated community would be to help the community to have its own disaster warning and response systems in order to be more prepared for disaster in the future. This would aid rebuilding because it allows the community to move forward and take responsibility for itself and its future.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: HEAL 2010



## Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange: *Pitching the idea to the community*

When Dasra's partner organization ROSE approached Vellakoil's villagers in Tamil Nadu to suggest that fishermen from Andhra teach them about task forces, ROSE was welcomed, but with bewilderment. No fishermen in Vellakoil had ever heard of task forces. Furthermore, Vellakoil fishermen were skeptical that another group of uneducated fishermen like themselves would be able to teach them anything useful. However, ROSE convinced Vellakoil to try a task force community exchange by convincing village leaders and appealing to ROSE's excellent prior track record in getting things done.

Vellakoil task force members now admit that it was not until after three days of an eight-day community exchange that they actually realized that the exchange would benefit their lives. However the exchange was successful because ROSE had convinced Vellakoil residents to try the exchange before they had complete buy-in. After realizing how important task forces would be for them, Vellakoil community members still had 5 more days of the exchange to learn about task forces from the teaching community.



## Wave of Life Exchange *Pitching the idea to the community*

It is hard to explain the transformative journey that children and communities will take when participating in the Wave of Life program. Dreamcatchers used tangible activities such as the "children's' needs maze" to explain its psychosocial curriculum. Adult community members who wanted to understand the program participated in a few interactive activities, much like the ones the children experience during the program, in order to buy in to the exchange.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Facilitating the community's role in planning

Community members should take an active role in planning and implementing every stage of a community exchange project. Planning projects is an important part of the empowerment process because it creates a sense of ownership and a desire to see the project succeed. The more community members plan the details of their projects, the more they get what they want in the end. Especially for community exchanges, the planning process, undertaken by the teaching community is an important part of that community's learning process.

Community planning also helps keep costs down significantly. Every detail that the community plans and executes, whether it is arranging travel and accommodation to go to a training, or buying supplies for a lesson, is one less task that the NGO partner has to do. Sometimes community members may need help thinking through the details of a plan, or buying train tickets, and that type of support should be provided by the NGO's field staff.

But, the more the community can do, the more transferable the process becomes.



## FIELD EXPERIENCE



Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange:

*A teaching community plans the content and who participates*

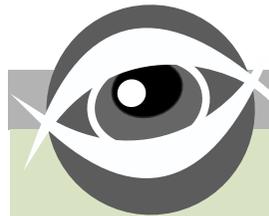
Before their trip to Tamil Nadu, a Dasra staff member met with the Andhra task force representatives to discuss how they were going to teach another community to form a task force. The task force representatives agreed on what topics they would cover and how much time they would need. They decided that the training would be conducted 3 hours a day for 8 days to allow the learning community enough time to fully grasp the topics and still carry out their daily work. The task force would need to be fully-functional by the time the Andhra fishermen went home and it was important to allow enough time for translation and for practice.

Once the local governing panchayat approved a task force community exchange in Vellakoil, the panchayat orchestrated the selection of task force members. With panchayat leaders presiding at a village meeting, each of ten Self Help Groups (SHGs) (five male and five female) chose three members to represent them on the task force. The community made the decision that SHG leaders would not be able to participate in the task forces, as they already have a leadership role in the community. However, if they or any other member of the community wanted to, they would still be able to attend the training.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: HEAL 2010



## Field Experience



### Mangrove Plantation Exchange

*Community members are left out of initial planning meetings*

To start off our mangrove plantation exchange, COPDANET, an NGO specializing in mangrove planting in India, invited the staff of both of the NGOs (ROSE and SEA) affiliated to the learning communities to a planning meeting. COPDANET did not invite any of the women from the nearby villages of Kallur, Keerapakkam, or Puddukhupam who work in the COPDANET-operated mangrove nursery and would make up the teaching community for the mangrove exchange. ROSE and SEA staff members attended the planning meeting with one community member from each learning community. After the planning meeting, each NGO team went back to their respective NGOs and fixed a time and date for the next training.

A few weeks later, ROSE and SEA delegations visited the COPDANET nursery on Pulicat Lake. Each delegation brought one NGO staff member with three community members to learn from COPDANET about the mangrove growing process. The training consisted of seed collection and planting mangrove seeds. The teaching community (local women employed to run COPDANET's nursery) was only present to teach the learning communities about seed planting. They had not been involved in the planning. The rest of the program was led by COPDANET project staff. The full technical process was not fully taught.

After the training at Pulicat Lake, COPDANET project staff visited both villages to decide on the exact location where the mangroves would be planted. The COPDANET director identified the most suitable areas for planting mangroves and arranged for their planting with local villagers and NGO staff. Although COPDANET had taught delegations from SEA and ROSE how to plant mangrove seeds, these villages did not plant their own seeds to be used in the mangrove plantations. Instead, they purchased 6-month old seedlings from the COPDANET nursery.

The actual exchange between the teaching community from the COPDANET nursery and the learning communities only happened for a brief period when both worked together to plant the mangrove seedlings in their predetermined location.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Finding the Right Partners

### Evaluating and Strengthening Relationships

When assessing whether the relationships you have with community members are enough to begin a community exchange project, ask yourself these questions:

- How long have you or your partners been working in this area?
- Does your organization know community members personally?
- What do community members think of your organization's work?

### How to build new and better relationships with community members

When asked this question, our grassroots NGO partners said:

Whenever they want to build new relationships, they seek permission of the village's elders or local government first.

If possible, someone who already knows the new community should go to introduce other NGO staff members. The NGO's field staff who will be working in the village should go door-to-door to introduce themselves, the NGO, and the proposed project. Building relationships takes time which must be accounted for in project planning.

### Other NGOs and Donors

We cannot emphasize enough how important good partners are to good project! The more effort you put into finding the right partner the fewer headaches you will have in the long term.

As a funders, if you are seeking organizations that can effectively implement community exchange projects, we suggest grassroots organizations that already have a good relationship with the communities in the area that you want to work. If no organization already has a relationship with the communities you want to work with, look for organizations that have a good track record building similar community relationships and that have the staff members and on-the-ground presence to be able to do so.



# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Seeking Community Partners

Community-based projects involve a lot of different kinds of people with different education levels, visions, personalities, and time constraints. It is important that partners know the type of commitment expected of them and are willing to collaborate as a team. If you can't trust your partners, you will have difficulty working with them. Therefore, always try to meet partners in person before committing to working together. Also keep in mind that partners' behavior may change as they change. We experienced changes in commitment both from NGOs that changed missions or focus, and small NGOs that then grew to be so big they no longer had time to work with us effectively. You can never predict how partners will change, but it is important to explain to them initially the entire nature and duration of commitment that you expect.

### Make sure:

- Partners know your expectations and you know theirs
- That someone from your organization has met your partners directly and in person
- Partners have time to collaborate at the level you expect

If you are looking for other NGOs to partner with, seek them through personal and professional contacts, regional NGO networks, or by searching for specific criteria on the internet. We were introduced to many of our project partners through our funders and their networks. You can find out more about our partners in the Appendix dedicated to them.

## Seeking Funders

When seeking the right funders, look for funders who support community exchange projects and understand their unique nature. Make sure that funders are aware that community exchange projects will grow and change organically based on the community's input. As the creator of a community exchange project, it is your responsibility to ensure that every stage of the project implementation is what is best for the community, even if funders support a different strategy. Funders can seem very powerful and prescriptive, but they are doing that because they want to help. If you have a different strategy of how your project should be implemented, you must convince funders why they need to back your strategy. Also remind funders that they should evaluate a project's success and cost effectiveness not just on whether the project was completed on schedule, but on how much a community feels empowered.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## TOOLKIT

A needs assessment should tell you:

- Basic information about the community
- The biggest problems facing the community (as perceived by each group of stakeholders)
- What else has been done to solve the community's problems
- How people hope your project will help them
- How each group of stakeholders will be involved in the project

Sample Questions:

- How big is the community as a whole?
- Who are the people who would participate in this project? What are their demographics (age, gender, position in the community etc)?
- What do you think are the biggest issues facing your community right now?
- What would you like to be the solutions to these issues?
- What have been the past efforts towards realizing these solutions (if any)?
- (Explain proposed project). Do you think this project will help solve some of your community's problems? Why or why not?
- Is there anything that we have not thought of? Anything that the project design is missing?
- How can you contribute to making this project a success?
- How much time will you have to work on this project? (only appropriate for stakeholders who are directly involved)
- What do you hope the impact of this project will be on your life? On the community as a whole?
- Do you have any questions about the project that you would like answered at this time?

## Needs Assessments

### Why a Needs Assessment?

Regardless of how well you already know your project area, a needs assessment is an essential part of any project design. Often during the assessment you will find needs that you did not know existed and you will hear first-hand how community members would like these needs addressed. In some cases, you may realize that you need to modify your original project plan. For example, projects that depend on environmental factors, should include a suitability study along with your needs-assessment. The last thing you want is to promise a community that you will teach them how to make their own fertilizer only to realize that the climate is not suitable for doing so.

Another important reason for the needs assessment is to engage the community right from the beginning. Community members have a much stronger desire to help a project succeed when it addresses a need that they brought up during the needs assessment.

### Designing a needs assessment

A needs assessment generally takes the form of a list of questions to ask communities and NGOs about their problems and what they expect the outcomes of the community exchanges will be. A needs assessment should be conducted in each community where the project will take place and with each group of stakeholders (i.e. community members, community leaders, partner NGO staff, partner NGO director, etc.). Out of the needs assessment, you should gather the following information: basic community characteristics, most pressing problems facing the community, prior efforts to solve these problems, what people expect from this project, how people plan to be involved in the project.

### Some sample questions to ask in a needs assessment

Remember to ask questions appropriate to the stakeholders you are asking. The questions presented in the box to the left are generic suggestions that should be modified to your project and audience. You may want to add many more specific questions relating to the logistical requirements of your specific project. These questions should be preceded by a complete introduction to the proposed project and the proposed role of the stakeholders with whom you are discussing.

### Conducting the needs assessment

You should schedule a meeting with each group of people who you will interview. The meeting length will depend on the number of people and the amount of questions. Someone should take notes during the meeting so that you can use stakeholders' answers to improve project design. Always assume that your audience does not know very much about your proposed project, and explain the project details accordingly.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Scheduling and Work Plan

The success or failure of community exchanges is often largely dependent on the availability of time. Try to work with communities that have time to work with you, and always create timelines based on what is happening in the community. If the amount of work a community has is seasonal, schedule time-intensive project work during community members' down time. It is worth reiterating that regular meetings must be scheduled at times of the day that community members are least busy with work, even if these times are less convenient for the NGO.

When creating target completion dates for a long-term project, factor in the dates of local festivals and busy marriage times. Whenever possible, donors from far away should also respect community schedules when visiting. Even an important donor can not compete for time with a local wedding.

Take a look at your project's proposed schedule.

Does it:

- Leave time for community members to be involved in planning?
- Plan for implementation at times of the day when community members are available?
- Conflict with any local religious holidays?
- Give staff members the appropriate number of rest days?
- Allow extra time to account for setbacks?
- Continue swiftly enough to sustain momentum and enthusiasm for the project?

Getting the community to make the time to do a project is a challenge that organizations across the world face. In the communities where we work, time quite literally is money, and the main reason that people have trouble finding time is that they need to work instead of sit at a meeting. It is important for NGOs to be sensitive to this dilemma and to work with community members to find times that are least disruptive to their work schedules. For fishing villages, sometimes this is in the middle of the day, and in other places sometimes villagers are free in the evening. Ask community members the times, days of the week, and seasons that they are most free and plan accordingly. Tell community members how important their participation is to a successful project outcome and explain to them how they will benefit from the project's success.



### FIELD EXPERIENCE

Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange:  
*Uncertain schedules*



One of the difficulties that seashell collectors in Kanyakumari district face is that they cannot anticipate their schedule ahead of time. Their work used to vary by seasons but with recent weather changes, collectors are no longer able to anticipate when an exceptional batch of seashells will wash up on shore. HEAL (our partner organization working to support task force development in seashell collecting villages of Kanyakumari) has worked hard to change the scheduling and goals of task force trainings because they know that villagers cannot commit to long trainings.

Wave of Life Exchange:  
*Weekend work*



Most Wave of Life activities were scheduled for weekends because that was when children were most free. Facilitators were able to take off a rest-day during the week, when the children were in school.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: HEAL 2010

Make sure that 'not having time' is not an excuse for being uninterested. If you sense disinterest in the project, try to renew the excitement level by explaining the project more fully, including how it will benefit community members. Sometimes community members will not believe that the project is actually happening until they see it, and will only become excited once it is in full swing. This is why you need dedicated field-staff to maintain momentum in the project. However, if community members actually do not want to participate, they should not be forced to. Similarly, if a whole community is not interested at all in a project, you should take it elsewhere.

## Designing a community exchange project

Answer these questions as you are designing a community exchange project:

- Where do you plan to conduct the project?
- Have you discussed your plans with the villagers and project partners who will be involved?
- What, if any, concerns do community members have?
- How do you plan to address community concerns?
- What type of time commitment will community members make to the project? Do people find that commitment to be reasonable?
- How will you reschedule project goals if other community issues come up that slow down the project?
- How do you plan to keep people interested in the project?
- Have you conducted or will you conduct a needs-assessment? What will that entail?
- How will community members communicate with the NGO?
- What aspects of the project will community members be responsible for? What will the NGO's responsibilities and commitment be?
- Have you created a budget and a timetable that allows for the variable nature of community exchange projects?

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Budgeting

A good budget is within the means of the funding organization and takes into account the costs at all stages of project implementation. Since this type of project is meant to be sustainable, the majority of the costs should be in the areas of start-up supplies and equipment as well as the necessary transportation budget to facilitate community exchanges.

### Hiring Staff

Hiring staff from within the community itself is often an excellent way to keep costs down and to ensure that the community takes ownership of its own project. Another technique to involve community members in the decision making for their community is to budget for a pool of seed money to be given directly to the community for use meeting the goals of the project.

### Monitoring Cost Efficiency

Like any other project, a community exchange project must be cost-effective. Cost-effectiveness should be a goal from the outset of project planning and budgets should be planned accordingly. Finding effective monitoring and evaluation tools for community exchange projects is difficult since it is hard to measure empowerment or sustainability. We have found that the best way of judging cost-effectiveness is to visit communities frequently and to keep in constant communication with community members and NGO field-staff. The more we know what is actually happening in a community, the more we can ensure that project goals are being met and provide proper support to NGO field staff and community members.



## FIELD EXPERIENCE

Wave of Life Exchange:  
*Hire from within*



Added benefits of hiring Wave of Life staff from within the community:

With the help of the partner NGOs, Dreamcatchers identified and hired local community members to become community facilitators for the Wave of Life program. Since they were already community members, Wave of Life facilitators knew their children and were able to keep up with them informally between Wave of Life sessions and even after the program ended. Community members who became facilitators gained status amongst their peers and were able to stay in their communities while receiving a monthly income for their work.

Mangrove Plantation Exchange:  
*Per-diem payments*



Both teaching and learning community members who spent the day planting mangroves during the community-exchanges received a per diem of Rs 100. Normally the teaching community women who work in the COPDANET nursery make 150 Rs per day in wages. The women say they did not mind the decrease since all their expenses were paid and they enjoyed the opportunity to help another village.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Provide for the Opportunity-cost of Missed Work

If community members will have to miss work in order to complete a project, conduct a training, or visit another community, the NGO should pay every attendee an allowance to compensate for missed work. The allowance should be equivalent to or slightly less than the day's wages that the community member would have got if he or she had been working at his normal work. This 'per diem' allowance is not a bribe or a salary to participate in the NGO project, but rather allows people who cannot afford to take time from work to participate in the project.

## Blank Budget Worksheet

It is important that your budget meet the standards of specificity as required by your organization and your funders. The standard form of a community exchange budget that we recommend is as follows. You will probably need to modify the itemized expenses list for your specific project.

## Questions about travel, accommodation and food of staff: No. Cost

Where will the community exchange be?

What is the cost for the villagers to get from village to exchange location?

How many participants will there be?

How many planning visits by exchange facilitator / manager?

How many nights will planning staff stay there? How much is it per night?

What is the cost for food, 3 meals a day plus snacks?

What is an appropriate *per diem* for staff per day?

How many staff do you need? (Think about Delivery, Documenting? Translator? Etc.)

## Materials for the exchange might include:

flip charts, pen, paper, string for tying up diagrams, games, camera or video

## Materials for the implementation of the project:

Depending on what the project is in terms of service, workshop, reconstruction, plantation etc.

## Other things to consider:

Publication of tools or reports, Typing, Printing, Translation, Costs related with formalizing CBOs



## FIELD EXPERIENCE



Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange:  
*Seeding other projects*

A partner NGO supporting task force formation in a village where the community exchange had recently concluded gave the community an extra \$500 as seed money to spend on task force projects. Using its seed money, the task force opened a bank account that accrues interest. Task force members decide together when they want to use this money for task force related projects, such as cooking for community members displaced after a cyclone.

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan



Budget Template				
Project heads	Activities	A Unit cost	B No. of Units	Subtotal (A x B)
<b>Learning/teaching group formation, needs assessment and planning</b>				
	Trips to teaching community exchange location			
	Transport			
	Food			
	Accommodation			
	Trips to learning community for needs assessment			
	Transport			0
	Food			
	Accommodation			
	Trainers honorarium			0
	Facilitator Honorarium			0
	Per diem for those traveling			
<b>Training Costs for the Exchange</b>				0
	Expenses occurred by teaching community			
	Transport			
	Food			0
	Accommodation			
	Food expenses on training days			0
	Honorarium for Participants and Staff			
	Community learners honorarium			0
	Honorarium for translator (if necessary)			
	Community trainers honorarium			0
	Facilitators honorarium			0
	Documentation honorarium			
	Demonstration / Activity cost			0
	Material for the exchange			
	Documentation			0
	Any additional expenses occurred by the learning community			
<b>Follow up meeting</b>				
	Travel expenses			0
	Food expenses			0
	Community learners honorarium			0
	Facilitators honorarium			0
	Trainers honorarium			0
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>				
	Stationery			0
	Telephone calls			
	Internet access			0
	Administrative travel			0
	Audit and Accounts			0
			<b>Subtotal</b>	
Miscellaneous			10%	
			<b>Total</b>	0

Please note:  
Depending on the economic status of the community, the budget can be simplified and lines items can be dependent on the needs of the project. This is only a sample suggestion

# Project Design and Planning

Photo: Charlotte Anderson: Manitham 2010



Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Creating an Action Plan

By now you have planned your project with the community, conducted a needs assessment, and designed your project according. You are already to get going, but how do you make sure to stay on track and that the project gets completed as per your schedule? Create an action plan with specific events, proposed participants, and expected outcome. Make your action plan detailed so that everyone in the organization can understand. Obviously specific dates and places may change, but the more you have planned in advance, the more you will know whether the project is on track.

Here are two blank action plans based on ways that our partners structure their action plans. Depending on your project you may use either of these or combine or modify them. On the next page is also a completed sample action plan.

### Version One:

	Training-Workshop	Implementation	Supervision	Review Process
1 <sup>st</sup> Phase				
2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase				
3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase				

### Version Two:

S.No	Date/Time/Place	Action	Participants	Expected Outcome	Follow Up
1					
2					

# Project Design and Planning

Vision | Community's Role | Right partners | Needs Assessment | Schedule and Workplan | Budgeting | Action Plan

## Sample Action Plan for the Fisherman's Exchange, using version two.

Date & Place	Action Plan	Participants	Outcome	Follow up
June 29, 30, 2008	Planning Meeting with HEAL Team, Village Panchayat, SHGs and Youth Groups	ROSE Task Force Team Male - 2 Female - 2 Facilitator - 1	The importance of forming Task Force Group will be sensitized and the village support will be gained to conduct the training.	ROSE facilitator and HEAL facilitator along with DASRA will closely communicate and updates the plan of the meeting in order to implement it.
Ottrathang anvilai Nagerkoil		HEAL Facilitator - 1 Community Volunteer - 3	15 active women will be identified from the SHGs.	Heal team will take responsible for Material purchase and accommodation to ROSE community in the village.
			15 active men will be identified from the Youth groups.	The programme schedule (place, time and food, arrangements) for the training will be finalized.
July 24 - 27, 2008	Task force group Training	ROSE Task Force Team Male - 3 Female - 3 Facilitator - 1	Village level Task Force Team will be formed based on their interest and physical skill.	ROSE and HEAL facilitators will take the responsibilities to organize and follow up the activities of the task force.
Ottrathang anvilai Nagerkoil		HEAL Community Members Male - 15 Female - 15 Facilitator - 1	Task force team will be divided into 5 different groups and the activities of each group will be well informed.	
			Village level task force governing body will be elected.	
			Mapping & Contingencies plan for the task force will be framed.	
			Demonstration or drill will be conducted on the final day of the training.	
October month 1 day	Follow up meeting	ROSE Task Force Team Male - 2 Female - 2	Success of the task force group will be documented.	Facilitators will be the responsible persons for conducting and reporting this
Ottrathang anvilai			Strength, weakness, opportunities and	

Nagerkoil		Facilitator - 1 HEAL	threatens will be identified in the group meeting.	meeting. HEAL Facilitator will closely follow up
		Task Force Team Male - 15 Female - 15 Facilitator - 1	Action plan will be finalized for the fore coming months.	the activities of the task force in the village as per the decision of the meeting.
January month 1 day	Experience sharing meeting	HEAL Task force Team Male - 3 Female - 3 Facilitator - 1	Vellakovil task force team activities will be shared.	ROSE and HEAL facilitators will take the follow up and monitoring the activities of the group. It will be informed to DASRA.
Vellakovil			Accounts keeping and records maintenance will be shared and discussed.	
Nagapatina m		ROSE Facilitator - 1 Task Force Team Male - 15 Female - 15	Practical difficulties faced by the groups will be discussed and solutions for that will be resolved.	ROSE team will take responsible to accommodate HEAL Team.
			Action plan of the month will be finalized.	
March month 1 day	Review meeting	ROSE Task Force Team Male - 3 Female - 3 Facilitator - 1	Overall activities of the task forces and its importance, usages and the changes that occurred in the community will be reviewed.	Community facilitators and DASRA will take part in the review and follow up meeting.
Ottrathang anvilai Nagerkoil		HEAL Task Force Team Male - 15 Female - 15 Facilitator - 1	Follow up and the future course of action will be finalized.	

# chapter three

## *exchange in action*

How to implement and exit a community exchange project

Implementation  
Monitoring & Evaluation  
Exit

# Implementation

## Implementation Check List

For most projects, the project implementation will fall under two separate categories:

- The community exchange itself, and
- The day-to-day community implementation of the project they have been taught.

NGOs should budget for both aspects and should plan follow-up into the original project design. This section will walk you through each stage of project implementation.

### 1. Organizing the Training/Exchange

This should be done by the communities with guidance from NGO field staff.

### 2. Choosing a location

The place should have all the basic facilities, good surrounding, not to be noisy, have good water facilities, proper air circulation, toilet facilities and should be a safe place for women.

You might want to suggest that the exchange takes part within the learning community's area, alternatively it could be held in a neutral place away from the learning community's own environment.

The organization willing to have an exchange in their area must make a list of the community members and volunteers willing to participate in the exchange

### 3. List the participants and their needs

Participants' food / accommodation / transportation all need to be arranged. The learning community arrange this if the teaching community comes to them. If the exchange is in another location, the NGO or the community can arrange this, and the roles and responsibilities just need to be decided at the planning meeting.

### 4. Designate a point person

A point person needs to be designated in each community, for communication purposes. A learning community takes most of the responsibility.

Responsibilities of the person in charge of the learning community include:

Organizing and coordinating with the teaching and learning community and updating the events properly.

The person in charge should think about different ways of helping the volunteers and contact the teaching community to get suggestions and share with the volunteers. He/ she should be a bridge between the two communities.

The person in charge should make every effort to visit the villages when the program is being implemented.

## Implementation



### 5. Plan length of exchange

This will depend upon how much time the teaching community thinks training will take and how much time they have to teach it (see section on scheduling p. 24).

### 6. Organize necessary equipment and materials

This should be done in advance. NGOs should require that all materials must be assembled at least 1 week prior to the exchange.

### 7. Decide if a translator will be required to work with the facilitator and plan accordingly

### 8. Teaching community plans lessons and designates roles

### 9. Community sensitization, scheduling, and reminders of dates

Both the organizations must give regular reminders about the exchange programme to their community people.

### 10. Implementing the exchange

Involve women and men in discussions / activities, and play warm-up icebreaker games (see appendix)  
Teaching community should ask for feedback and tailor lessons to learning communities' interests

### 11. NGO follow up

Should be planned and budgeted for in advance and agreed with community about how much follow up it needs  
Follow up activities need to be documented

### 12. Regular feedback

The person in charge of the learning community should inform the teaching community about what is happening in the field – a monthly review should be conducted and informed properly to the teaching team. The person in charge of the program should update the teaching group about the program.

Monthly reports and review reports should be sent to the teaching group by the person in charge of the learning community.

### 13. Formalizing a CBO

Depending on the outcome of the exchange, task forces or community groups may feel they would like to register and formalize any active group as a CBO. For guidelines on how to do this see appendix.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

There are many different types of monitoring and evaluation. Which strategies you use will depend on what you are most familiar with, what your funders ask for, and what makes sense for the project. Dasra recommends conducting a Community Exchange Review as part of your monitoring and evaluation process

### Community Exchange Review

After concluding the initial exchanges and implementing their project, all communities involved should meet with one another to discuss how the project happened and what they learned. Projects that have multiple phases should have some sort of review meeting after each phase, though the intermediate meetings may be more informal than a final review. The length of the exchange review depends on the number of participants in attendance and their availability. Dasra's exchange reviews varied from one to three days.

Facilitators of each discussion in the review will have a list of questions to ask participants and guide the discussion. Sometimes facilitators can even use activities to spur discussions.

### Report

After the community exchange review takes place, its findings should be standardized in a Community Exchange Review report. This report will explain an overview of what took place at the meeting and the outcomes of the meeting. The report also details next steps in improving the community exchanges in the future. While compiling such a report may seem tedious, it is absolutely essential so that results from the concluded exchanges can be implemented in the future.

### Documentation

When in doubt, document your work more than you think is necessary. The more you have written down about how and why you made decisions and what their outcome was, the more you can show other people that your project works. Also, when it comes time to evaluate your project, you will have all of the information you need.

At the very least, someone should take notes at all decision-making meetings and during the community exchange itself. If possible, it always helps to have individual success stories documented that you can use for promotional purposes or to convince other communities to participate in the project. Some organizations only document their successes, but document your trials and failures too! The more you know about what happened in the current program, the more you can make a similar program more successful in the future.

It is always hard to find time for documentation when so many other things need to be done during a project. The best way to balance this is to have a designated note-taker at meetings and to have regular deadlines for NGO staff to turn in completed documentation.



# Monitoring & Evaluation



Sample schedule for a community exchange review:

Day and time	Activity	Objective	Process
9.30 am to 10 am	Registration		
10 am to 11.30 am	Experience sharing on community exchanges	Objective: To create the platform for the teaching community and the learning community to review their experiences.	Step 1: The participants will be divided into XXX groups comprising partnering NGOs based on topics given and share their teaching and learning experiences for 45 minutes.
	This sharing will focus on general information about the methodologies, content and planning schedule adopted during the community exchanges.		Step 2: The four groups will present their discussions for 45 minutes.
11.30 am – 11.45 am	Tea		
11.45 am - 1.00 pm	Sharing of Successful aspects and challenges of the exchanges	Objective: To identify the success points of the exchanges. This sharing will be focused on 1. Relationship among the teaching and learning communities 2. Community mobilization. 3. Community participation 4. Conceptual internalization 5. Changes taken place in the community 6. Organization support Objective	Panel presentation.  A panel consisting of community members, including members from both the learning and the teaching community will present the success elements of particular community exchanges.  This session will be facilitated by the selected organizational staff.
1.00pm – 2pm	Lunch		
2.00pm – 4.00pm	Discussion to identify the elements that would help the program to sustain	Objective: To identify the element that is to make the exchange sustainable  This sharing will be focused on: 1. The element to support sustainability 2. How will it contribute to the sustainability? 3. How did the element evolve?	Discussion within the different exchange groups. The teaching and learning group to discuss and identify the element to contribute sustainability.

# Monitoring & Evaluation



## Community Exchange Review Report

### 1. Introduction to the Overall Program

#### 2. Purpose Statement

Why was the review conducted?

This might be specifically to deal with an issue, as a general documentation of the exchange or to feed into a specific next stage program or next stage exchange.

#### 3. Participants

Outline who took part and be clear about who didn't if key people were unable to be in the review.

#### 4. Overview of the meetings

##### i. Sharing experiences learning, successes and challenges

This can take the form of presentations, a panel discussion, small group discussions followed by presentations.

##### ii. Analysis of causes for successes and challenges

It is advisable to break the review into stakeholder groups at this point so that the NGO personnel and the different community groups can speak more openly and give feedback, praise and constructive criticism.

##### iii. Standard setting and next steps

Documenting how the review and content of the exchanges can be used again.

#### 5. Summary of Outcomes by Stakeholders group

##### i. Experiences and learnings of community members

##### ii. Success aspects of the exchanges

##### iii. Challenges faced by each stakeholder from different perspectives:

Community members and family

Learning community members

Teaching community members

Teaching community with the organization

Teaching community with the learning community

Organization staff with the community exchange process

#### 6. Next Steps or Conclusion

# Monitoring & Evaluation



## Wave of Life Community Exchange Review Questions

### Qualitative: (for the facilitators implementing the program)

- What were your key learnings from the community exchange program?
  - What skills and capacity did the exchange program help you build?
  - What do you think will be the long term impact the community?
  - If you had to implement the program again with the children what would you do differently?
  - Which methods did you find most useful and why?
  - How would you rate your overall satisfaction with this program?
- 1      2      3      4      5
- 1= Fair ; 2= Average; 3= Good; 4= Very good; 5= Excellent
- What kind of further support would you need to continue implementing the program?
  - During the program what I enjoyed most was . . . . .
  - What further actions would you like to take, based on your new skills?
  - Did the program positively impact the children?
  - What were some of the challenges? How did you address these?

### For facilitators:

1. What did you find most powerful about the process?
2. What skills and capacities did you develop?
3. Do you think that more community exchange would be useful?
4. What resources and further skills would you need to develop for future community exchanges?
5. If you had to do this again, what would you do differently?

### For Children:

1. What new skills did you find in yourself after the program?
2. In what ways can such a program help other children and you in the community?
3. Which of the exercises did you enjoy most?
4. What did you learn that you would like to remember for your life?

## Monitoring & Evaluation



### FIELD EXPERIENCE



#### Documentation: Sample Success Story

Name: Rekha (name changed)

Age: 14

Education: 9th class

Residing at: Thamari Pudur

Family background: Father (now living with another woman), Mother, Elder Sister and Younger Brother  
 Rekha's father left her mother and is now living with another woman. Her mother and her sister are the bread winners for the family. She likes to play with the little children. (She is a physically challenged person.) She is interested in writing poems. She is aiming to become a doctor. Her sister is the important person who supports her in all the activities.

Before coming to the Wave of Life program she suffered from an inferiority complex. She always thought she was good for nothing. When she joined in at the children's activity centre she did not speak with anyone. If someone tried to speak to her she used to avoid them thinking that they would feel pity for her. She never expressed her problems and worries to anyone.

After attending the Wave of Life program she has experienced many changes within her. She has developed great confidence within her. She is sharing her worries with the other children and to the staff. When the other children appreciated her for her poems she felt very happy and proud about herself.

Earlier she used to wait for her grandmother to take her back to home from the tuition center but now she goes with the other children. She practices to walk on her own with great confidence and she tells everyone that the Wave of Life has seeded this confidence within her.

#### Documentation: Anonymous Success Stories

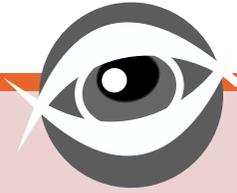
You can still document success stories even when you want to keep the identity of the person unknown. Just ask questions and write down direct quotes anonymously. Here is an example from participants in a Wave of Life class:

"I used to be very angry with myself and with others. If I become angry I used to throw things and break them. But now I have changed that completely, even if I feel like throwing I suddenly remember the message of the program and I keep the thing down. I also used to be very afraid for any simple problem and now I am courageous enough to think that the program will give me knowledge to face my life. I have become a very happy person now and I am gaining lots of wisdom through this program."

"I have hurt many people through many ways before coming to [this program]. There were many wounds in my heart related to my family condition. After coming to [the Wave of Life program] and participating in this program I feel that I have changed a lot to face anything in life without losing hope. I got an opportunity to express out my grief so I feel completely healed and have identified my good qualities. I am now capable of respecting the good qualities and I appreciate them. Again and again I will have happy days in my life through this program."

"I used to be very afraid to participate in meetings. But this program has helped me to understand that I need not to be afraid about any meetings by its different way of doing program for us. I used to be afraid to come out alone and now I am able to come alone for the classes."

## Exit



### FIELD EXPERIENCE



Fisherman's Taskforce Exchange:  
*A new way of life learnt from the exchange*

At the time of this writing, Vellakoil residents know that NGO funding commitment to their village is about to end, which will mean the end of regular staff visits to the village. However, this doesn't mean the task force will cease to function without NGO follow up; the task force is a formalized CBO and is strong enough that it will continue its work using its seed money that is now in the CBO's bank account.



Wave of Life Exchange:  
*When exit doesn't mean project continuation*

Some projects are not as self-perpetuating as task forces, but their impact is felt even when the project ends. After completing the Wave of Life program, children were happier and more adjusted in all aspects of their lives. Even when they stopped going to Wave of Life sessions, children were able to use what they had learned in the program can bring positive impact to the rest of their lives.

### Exit

Communities participating in community exchange projects should feel the project's effects after NGOs and donors leave. Communities will need to be helped through the planning and implementation stages, but the NGO phase-out must be planned into an initial project. The reality of any project is that it will one day end, and it is much better that communities are prepared to continue their hard work on their own than an ongoing project just stops when funding stops. If community members are told from the beginning that they will soon continue their project on their own, they will be ready to do so when the time comes.

# chapter four

## *troubleshooting*

A few 'what if...!' scenarios from our direct experience

**“We are finding it difficult to persuade the community to open up to us and feel comfortable with us”**

Community members are so used to being marginalized that they are shy even around NGO staff. There are a variety of techniques that you can use to get community members to feel more comfortable around the NGO staff. Some of our partner organizations suggest the following techniques:

- Using peer learning so that community members teach each other
- Splitting up the group into several small groups in which individuals will feel more comfortable speaking. Talkative people should be divided up amongst the groups so that they can help the other group members express their opinions
- The NGO staff member responsible for the project should make an effort to get to know each participant individually and should make house visits as appropriate
- The leader in a discussion session should start by asking easy questions that group members feel they can answer.
- The leader should know and use everyone's name
- Many group meetings function with a talking piece wherein the person holding the piece is required to talk and then pass the piece to someone else when done.

**“We want community members to take initiative but they aren't.”**

Some communities are full of shy people. Many of the people we have worked with have been marginalized in some way their whole lives. Some people have never been put in a leadership role and therefore don't know how to take charge, even when given the opportunity. Our best advice is to coach hesitant people through the village's decision-making process until they are comfortable. The more community members can create a comfortable space for each other to voice ideas where they know they will not be ridiculed, the more people will actually participate.

**“A few community members are dominating the process for everyone.”**

We have often faced the problem that the community members who are most comfortable doing the talking end up doing all of it. Besides reiterating that group meetings are for everyone, an NGO staff member can facilitate dialogue by helping community members elect a different meeting chair each meeting, breaking people up into small groups to discuss ideas, breaking groups up by gender to discuss and then present to each other, or creating activities that quieter group members can lead. If even after carefully adjusting situations so that everyone can speak, the NGO staff member finds the same person or people dominating, it is time to talk to them individually. Often very talkative people enjoy talking and expressing their opinions so much that they don't even realise that they are making it hard for others to participate. These people should be taken aside, discretely to a location where they cannot be seen or heard by the rest of the group. This could occur before or after the group's general meeting, but should not interrupt it. Alone with the NGO staff member, the talkative people can present their view of the situation and can brainstorm ways not to intimidate everyone else.

**“We are facing unexpected costs!”**

Regardless of how well you budget, you may encounter unexpected costs that put you over-budget. Hopefully, once you have started the project, you will be able to rearrange your organization's overall budget to account for the extra project costs. However, if midway through the project, you need to re-budget your remaining costs, do so with the community's interests in mind. You may need to reduce the scale or length of your project, but you should keep the community involved in each step of project planning and implementation.

**“The NGO staff-contact for the community just announced that she will be resigning next month to get married.”**

Frequent staff turnover can be a major problem for NGOs, but it doesn't have to be. Organizations that work to keep staff happy and engaged in their work may face less turnover, but every organization will lose staff members as they move on in their careers, move locations, and develop changing needs in their personal lives. As an organization, you need to anticipate turnover and work to make sure that all the knowledge of any project is not entirely centralized to one staff member. Staff members should document their work both in writing and in verbal check-ins with a superior so that organizational knowledge is not lost when staff members leave.

It is also important that the NGO has a set procedure for resignations that all staff members know about. The procedure should require that the outgoing staff member inform the organization a set time in advance of his or her departure date, and when possible should help train his or her replacement. For field workers, it makes a big difference if the outgoing field worker can introduce his replacement to the community. If this is not possible, the outgoing field worker should inform the community of her departure, and let community members know who they can be in touch with at the organization until a new field worker takes over.

**“Much of our results are qualitative rather than quantitative how can we ensure that our donors understand results beyond the numbers?”**

The goal of community-driven projects is empowering people, as much as it is vaccinating children, planting mangroves, or organizing women's groups. Therefore, in addition to measuring whether children actually got vaccinated, etc., an NGO must incorporate qualitative documentation into their project results. This means interviewing community members about how the community has changed or how community members have benefited from the project indirectly. Projects can also be documented effectively through photographs and video: for example, AJWS sent a video team to Vellakoil to record the task force's disaster simulation. Dream Catchers also documents their work through children's artwork created during Wave of Life sessions.

# chapter five

*concluding thoughts*

## Conclusion

### The community exchange lives on

Two years after we began community exchanges in Tamil Nadu, we held a community exchange review with all of our partner NGOs and communities in the state. The purpose of this review was to evaluate and improve upon our exchanges so that we could create a standardized method to organizing successful community exchanges in the future.

At the feedback session on the final day of the review, one participant measured success of the community exchange as follows:

*When we planned the community exchange in 2005 none of us thought it would happen in this way and we did not expect this [amount of] success in the program. In the beginning, when we reached the community members, they were not giving proper support, they had no clue of what we were trying to tell them.*

*Now the Government has been turning to us looking at our program in the communities run by the communities, and is very surprised by the successful activities done through the Community Exchange Programs. We must be very proud to be a part of doing the work in the communities with the community member*

*NGO staff member, April 2007 Community Exchange Review, Chennai*

This toolkit gives you the tools to design, plan, and implement community exchange programs in your own community or the communities where you work. But it is up to you to use the toolkit as a guide to creating your own programs. We encourage you to design programs and make them happen, for only then will you see the magic of community exchanges for yourself.



# Appendices

1. Featured Organizations
2. Formalizing a CBO
3. Icebreaker Games for Workshops
4. Acknowledgements
5. Worksheets

# 1. Featured Organizations

## The Funder:

### American Jewish World Service

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an international development organization motivated by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice. AJWS is dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the developing world regardless of race, religion or nationality. Through grants to grassroots organizations, volunteer service, advocacy and education, AJWS fosters civil society, sustainable development and human rights for all people, while promoting the values and responsibilities of global citizenship within the Jewish community.

#### Contact information:

American Jewish World Service

45 West 36th Street

New York, NY 10018

USA

T: 212.792.2900 800.889.7146 F: 212.792.2930

[www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org)

## The Community Based Organizations

### Coastal Poor Development Action Network, India (COPDANET)

COPDANET India was born in 1998 to work for a better coastal ecosystem and improve the quality of life to several thousands of coastal poor. COPDANET comprises of scientists, environmentalists, researchers and NGOs who serve as watchdogs conserving natural regenerative systems and the inhabitants. The organization is very involved in planting mangroves in the Pulicat Lake region of Tamil Nadu and in the Andaman Islands.

#### Contact information:

COPDANET - Coastal Poor Development Action Network India

No.85, Vivekananda School Street,

Sakthivel Nagar,

Chennai - 600 082

INDIA

T: 0091 44 26710368 F: 0091 44 26712150

E: [arpmads@vsnl.net](mailto:arpmads@vsnl.net)

# 1. Featured Organizations

## Dreamcatchers

The Dreamcatchers Foundation works with children who have histories of psychological trauma and violence, using non-conventional, innovative learning exercises to promote creativity and provide healing, character-building, and personal development.

Contact information:

Dreamcatchers Foundation,  
Ground Floor, Krishnasmurthi Building,  
Plot no: 12/RR, Chuim Village, Khar [west],  
Mumbai- 4000 052.

T: 98 92 61 26 46 E: dreamcatchersfoundationindia@gmail.com

## HEAL

HEAL (Human Education and Action for Liberation) Movement is a grassroots NGO based in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu. HEAL works with marginalized communities in the area including seashell collectors. The organization's mission is to facilitate people's organizations at the grassroots level and coordinate to find solutions for the betterment of their life towards egalitarian society.

Contact information:

HEAL Movement, 22C Scott Nagar, Near Scott Christian College  
Nagercoil 629 003  
Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu  
India

T: 04652-228496 E: heal\_m@hotmail.com

## ROSE

ROSE is a grassroots organization based in Nagapatnam, Tamil Nadu. After the tsunami, the organization was able to provide assistance to some of the worst affected communities. ROSE has continued to support communities throughout the rebuilding process and among other projects, has been active in forming task forces and beginning the Wave of Life program.

Contact information:

Rural Organization for Social Education – ROSE  
#7, Paris Corner Complex,  
West Main Street,  
Pudukkottai – 622001.  
Tamilnadu India.

T: 04322- 224148, 244076. E: roseweman@rediffmail.com

## 2. Formalizing a CBO



### The regulatory process

#### 1. Formulation of CBO's

The first step in formalizing a CBO should be initiated through community mobilization. Initiate dialogue with the village head and village committee. Once the permission has been guaranteed through community mobilization, a plan for the CBO's operation must be drafted along with the community members based on their needs and interest of the communities' involvement for specific cause. Follow up meetings with the community and the leaders are imperative for regular evaluation and monitoring of the situations. It is very important to mobilize local community seed money through NGO or village committee to make the CBO operate independently.

#### 2. Structuring the Group

Though every step in initiating a CBO is important, structuring the group heads the list. It is important to explain each and every member of the team clearly about their roles and responsibility. Unless it is done, sustenance of the group is not guaranteed. The CBO must be assisted for drafting their own implementation plan which will better suit their timing and seasons. Also they must be advised to focus their plan at doable activities to ensure implementation. When their works are evaluated, they must be mentored on the basis of evaluation feedback.

#### 3. Why It's Important

CBO's are essential because they ensures the development of their own community. Both the CBO and its outcome will sustain in the community for longer period of time. Also this ensures the participation and ownership of the community which leads to better outcome. Moreover the community becomes independent to carry out their development initiatives rather dependent. This imparts and augments analytical thinking capacity of the local community for sustainability of the CBO.

#### 4. Legal Formulation

Any CBO has to be registered under Trust /Society/Companies Act to ensure sustained legal operation of the CBO. It is always advised to open a Joint Bank account in the name of the CBO to ensure proper, transparent and legitimate financial operation.

## 3. Icebreaker Games for Community Exchange Workshops



### Name games

#### 1. Catch that Name

This game requires several soft balls or other objects (i.e. stuffed animals) that participants can throw to each other. All participants stand in a circle and introduce themselves by name. The leader says a person's name and then throws the ball to her. She says someone else's name and throws the ball to him. Without repeating people who have already received the ball, each person continues the passing chain to someone else in the group. Once everyone has received the ball, the last person throws it back to the leader. The leader starts the passing cycle all over again with several balls in quick succession. Each pass must be prefaced by a name, and must follow the group's pre-established passing order. For the game to work, everyone must remember who passed to them and then who they passed to. If the group is handling the passing order well, the leader can collect all the balls and try passing in reverse. This means that the last person passes to the person who he received from etc. By the time the group gets through a few iterations of passing through the passing order backwards, everyone should at least be familiar with each others' names.

#### 2. Shooting Names

Participants stand in a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle points his finger at someone in the circle, "shooting" him. The person who is shot bends down and the two people on either side of him "shoot" each other by pointing at each other and saying the other person's name. Whoever is slower to say the other person's name goes into the middle next.

#### 3. Hidden Names

This should be played to learn and remember names only after participants have introduced themselves. Participants line up one behind the other in two even lines facing each other. Between the two lines, two leaders hold a sheet such that one side of the line cannot see the other. Leaders quickly lower the sheet and the two participants say each other's names. Whoever says the other's name faster should join the end of the opposite line, whoever is slower is out until the end of the round. Play several rounds until participants know each others' names.

#### 4. Moving Names

A group classic. Participants stand in a circle and the first person must say her name while doing a movement (ie touching her toes, clapping his hands etc.) The second person says the first person's name while doing her movement and then says his name with a different movement. Each person adds on to the name/movement list and then says the names/does the movements of all the people before. If someone gets stuck remembering others' names or movements, group members help by giving the hint of the person's movement. The last person does the movements and says the names of everyone in the circle.

## 3. Icebreaker Games for Community Exchange Workshops



### Get to know you

#### 1. All my Neighbors

Everyone stands in the circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle says “all my neighbors who:” and completes the sentence with anything about himself that other members of the group may also share. (ie: “all my neighbors who like to eat dosai,” “all my neighbors who like Shah Rukh Khan,” “all my neighbors who have older sisters” etc.). Everyone who thinks the statement also applies to them must run through the circle to another open spot in the circle. Whoever gets stuck in the middle when everyone else has found a place in the circle continues by saying another “all my neighbors” phrase. There is no end to this game; stop it when the group loses interest or when everyone has had a chance in the middle.

#### 2. Elbow to Ear

Have the group mingle in a confined area. The leader calls out two body parts, such as “elbow and ear”, “knee and toe” etc. and group members must pair up with their elbow touching their partner’s ear. While pairs stay in these awkward positions, ask them a question to share the answer with their partner. Questions can be general to get to know each other or can also be about a specific topic that the group is discussing. Leaders should be sensitive to group member’s level of comfort with physical contact. After the last question, bring everyone together and ask for a few people to share some interesting things they learned about their peers.

#### 3. Object Introduction

Leaders place a collection of found objects in the center of the circle. Leaders explain that each type of object corresponds to a specific question that the participants must answer when they pick up that object from the center. Leaders then tell the group what question corresponds to each object. There should be the same number of objects of each type as there are members of the circle. For example, there could be enough stones, shells, and sticks in the center for each participant to pick one of each. As participants pick stones, they say their name and where they are from, when they pick shells they say what they are excited to learn in the training/workshop, and when they pick sticks they tell a story of a moment in their lives that made them really happy. This game can be played in several rounds with each participant picking a stone and answering the same question before the group moves on to the next question, or it can be done such that each participant picks all of her objects and answers all questions before moving on to the next participant. Objects can be substituted based on availability and the game can be played with any questions.

## 3. Icebreaker Games for Community Exchange Workshops

### Warm-ups and Physical Games

#### 1. Simon says/Bha bato/Big fish little fish

There are a million variations to the 'do as I say, not as I do' game. In Simon says, participants should only mirror the leader's actions if instructions are prefaced with 'Simon says'. If the leader says 'simon says raise your hand', then participants raise their hands. But if the leader says 'raise your hand', then anyone caught raising their hand is out.

Other variations of this game include Bha (arms raised), bhato (arms outstretched), bhato bhato (arms down). A leader explains the movements and calls out movements while performing the correct action. Occasionally the leader calls an action and does not do the action that he called. Participants should do what has been called and those who copy the leader instead are out. These movements and words can be substituted for anything: big fish and little fish with hands indicating a size, drinking coffee, making chapati, whatever the participants or leader can think of.

#### 2. Hand Squeeze

Participants stand or sit holding hands in a circle. The leader squeezes his neighbor's hand and instructs participants to pass the squeeze around the circle as fast as they can to their next neighbor. The leader times the group on how long it takes the squeeze to reach all around the circle and come back to the leader. Once an initial time has been established, the leader challenges participants to beat their previous time and to set and meet goals of how fast they can pass the squeeze around the circle.

#### 3. Pass the Spoon

Participants stand shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle with one person in the center. One of the members of the circle starts passing the spoon (or other object) around the circle with the objective that the person in the middle does not see where the spoon is. The person in the middle tries to guess who has the spoon as participants continue to pass it. If the person in the middle is right, the person who he 'caught' with the spoon goes to the middle.



## 3. Icebreaker Games for Community Exchange Workshops



### Teamwork Games

#### 1. Turn it Over

Participants are divided into teams of 4 people and each group is given a full sheet of newspaper. All group members must stand on the newspaper while together the group turns over the newspaper sheet. No one may leave the newspaper sheet until the objective has been completed. Alternatively small mats or sheets of plastic can substitute for newspaper and the group size can be changed according to the size of the mat that must be flipped. Group members should be snug standing on their mat/newspaper.

#### 2. Crossing the Bay

Participants are at one end of a 'bay' infested with sharks. They must all cross to the other side of the bay together and each person may only step with each foot once. A leader defines a starting and finish line based on the number of people in the group (he should add about 1.5 meters of distance to cross per person). The finish line should be far enough away that participants think they won't get there, but close enough that they can with teamwork.

#### 3. 'Cuchi-cuchi' War

This game requires two very soft balls or throwable objects called "cuchi-cuchis". Participants are divided into two even teams. Each team selects one person from their team to represent the team. Everyone else must stand on the sidelines of the playing area. Team representatives are blindfolded and brought into the playing area. Team members on the sidelines must verbally guide the blindfolded member to either "cuchi-cuchi" and direct the blindfolded person to throw the cuchi-cuchi at the opposition's (also-blindfolded) representative. If either ball gets thrown out of bounds, the leader tosses it back into the game area. Both representatives keep playing until one gets hit. Then they go back to their teams and send two more representatives to be blindfolded. Non-blindfolded team members must be active in directing the blindfolded person towards the cuchi-cuchi.

## 3. Icebreaker Games for Community

### Exchange Workshops



#### 4. Chief

Participants stand in a circle and elect one person to leave the circle. While this person is out of hearing and sight range, the members of the circle choose a 'chief'. The chief begins a simple repetitive action (such as stomping, clapping, shaking etc) and everyone in the circle follows. Once the entire circle is doing the same movement, they invite back the person who they sent away. This person stands in the middle of the circle and tries to guess who is the chief. Meanwhile the chief changes the movement as often as she thinks she can get away with it. When the person in the center finally deduces who is the chief, she rejoins the circle and the chief becomes the person to be sent away and come back to guess the new chief.

#### 5. Electricity chain

Participants sit or stand in a circle around a table. They put both their hands palms down on the table in front of them and are then instructed to put their right hand crossing over their neighbor's left such that each person sees two other people's hands between his own. Then someone taps his hand against the table and the circle is instructed to pass the tap around the circle in hand order. If anyone messes up and taps out of order, he must remove the hand from the tapping circle. Once participants get the idea, the leader can introduce additional moves such as the double tap to change the direction of the tapping, or a palm vertical tap to skip one hand.

#### 6. Action Chair

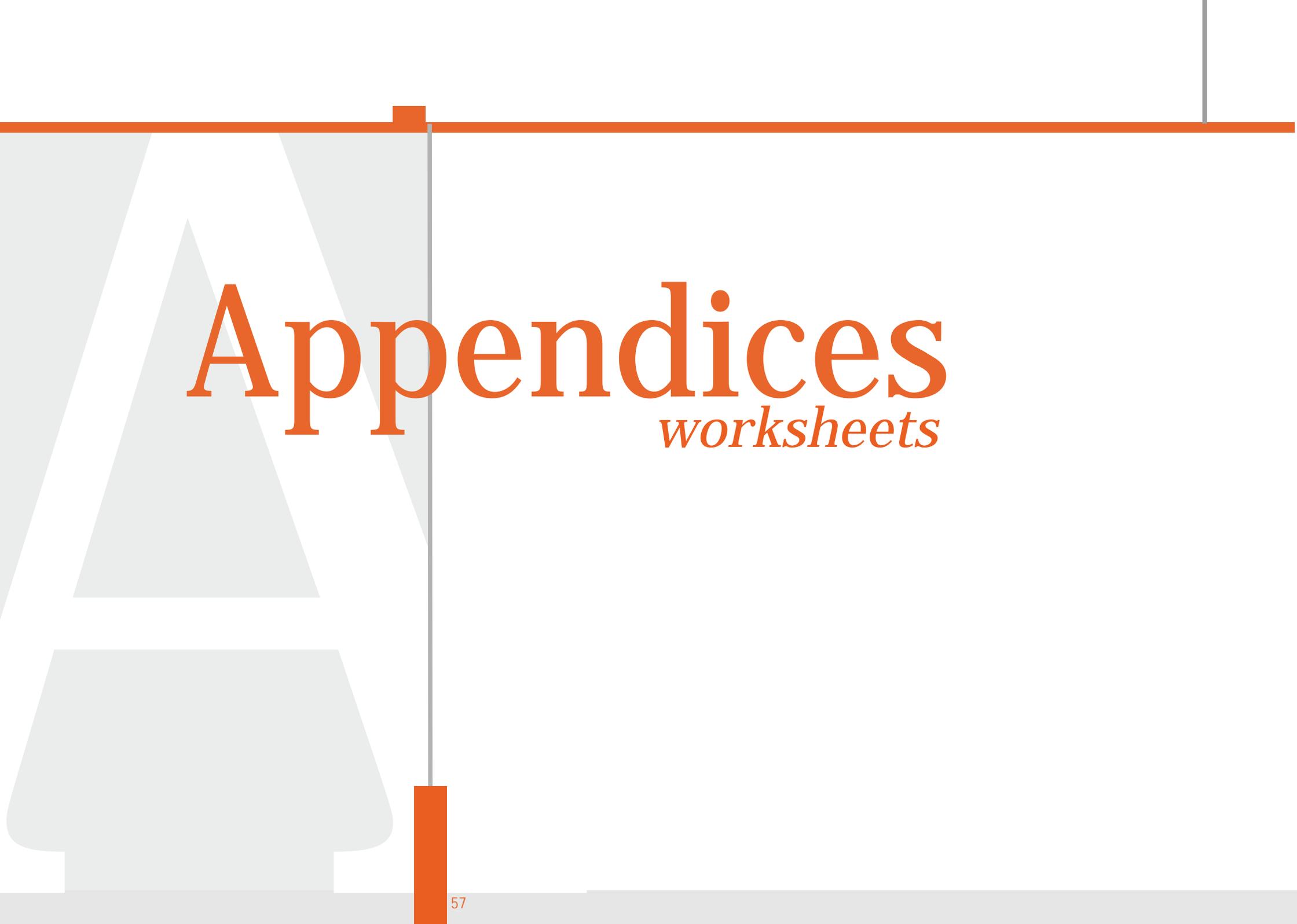
Someone sits in a chair while the rest of the group makes a semicircle around her. She performs a song/dance/other action while moving towards someone in the semicircle. When she arrives at that person's spot, she trades places with him and he must imitate her action until he gets back to the chair. He then performs his own action while heading towards someone else in the circle and the game continues.

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- Leah Pillsbury
- Charlotte Anderson [www.charlotteandersonphotography.com](http://www.charlotteandersonphotography.com)



# Appendices

*worksheets*



Action Plan Template 1

Phase	Training Workshop	Implementation	Supervision	Review
Phase 1				
Phase 2				
Phase 3				

Action Plan Template 2

	Date / Time / Place	Action	Participants	Expected Outcome	Follow up
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Community Exchange  
Review Schedule

Time	Activity	Objective	Process
10.00-11.30			
11.30-11.45	Break		
11.45-1.00			
1-2pm	Lunch		
2.00-4.00pm			



Heroes of the Exchange



catalyst for  
social change